



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego  
Planning & Development Review  
**Building Development Review**  
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## Building Newsletter 5-2

Requirements for two or more  
Buildings on the Same Property

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes  
1998 California Building Code: Chapter 5  
Revision Date: July 1999

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### I. Determining Fire-Resistive Requirements For Two or More Buildings on the Same Property

When a new building is to be constructed on the same property as an existing building, the location of one building with respect to the other will, to a certain extent, determine the fire-resistive requirements of both buildings. The two methods indicated in Section 503.3 of the Building Code will be used to determine these requirements, and are more fully explained below. The provisions of Section 503.3 shall be applied in order to prevent existing buildings from becoming nonconforming because of the proximity of new buildings. The least restrictive of the following methods may be used.

#### Method A.

Assume that a property line exists anywhere between the buildings. The required wall and opening protection for each building which faces this assumed property line will then be determined by using the distance from the assumed property line to each wall and referring to Table No. 5-A of the CBC and requirements based on the type of construction. In some instances, this will mean that the wall of an

existing building which faces the assumed property line and which is directly opposite a wall of the new building must be altered in order to provide the proper wall and opening protection.

#### Method B.

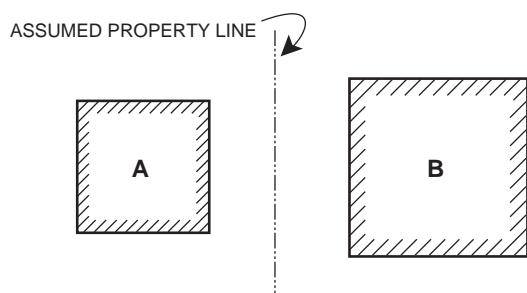
Instead of assuming that a property line exists between the buildings, assume that the new and existing buildings are one building. The area of this one building shall be assumed to be equal to the sum of the areas of the new and existing buildings, and this total area must not exceed the allowable area specified in Table No. 5-B with regard to occupancy and type of construction. When the two buildings are of different occupancies, however, an occupancy separation complying with Table No. 3-B will be required.

### II. Exit Courts as an Alternative

With either of the above methods the area between the buildings may, in some cases, be classified as an exit court. In this case, wall and opening protection shall be as required by Section 1006.3.5.3 of the CBC.

FIGURE 1

#### BUILDINGS ON THE SAME PROPERTY



#### METHOD A: AN ASSUMED PROPERTY LINE BETWEEN BUILDINGS

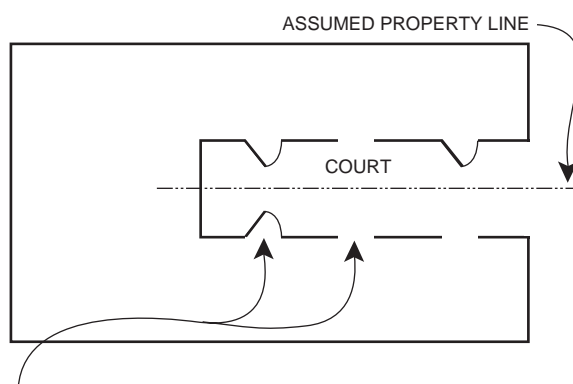
- FIRE RESISTANCE AND OPENING PROTECTION FOR WALLS ADJACENT TO THE PROPERTY LINE MUST COMPLY WITH THE CODE.
- PROPERTY LINE MAY BE PLACED TO TAKE BEST ADVANTAGE OF WALL AND OPENING PROTECTION.

#### METHOD B: AS A SINGLE BUILDING

- ALLOWABLE AREA AND TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION ARE BASED ON THE MOST RESTRICTIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OCCUPANCIES HOUSED.
- TOTAL FLOOR AREA MAY NOT EXCEED THAT ALLOWED FOR A SINGLE BUILDING.

FIGURE 2

#### BUILDINGS CONTAINING COURTS



#### Unprotected openings permitted if:

- Not more than two levels open into the court, and
- Building and court combined area is within allowable area, and
- Occupancy classification is other than Group I.